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## Summer musical is a blast



PHOTO COURTESY LANGSTON HUGHES CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Above, youth rehearse a dance number for *The Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center* summer production "*Grease: The Way We Do It!*" The annual summer musical event showcases youth from all over Seattle in traditional musicals with a unique twist. Matinees are at 1 p.m. on Aug. 19 and 20 and cost \$1. Call 206-684-4757. Evening performances are at 7 p.m. on Aug. 20 and 21 and cost \$5. As always, the show is performed at the Paramount Theater. The box office is located at 911 Pine St.

## City Council opposes funding cuts to Section 8

By CHARLES REDELL  
*Voice editor*

In response to a plan proposed by the Bush administration to cut funding to the Section 8 housing program, the Seattle City Council unanimously passed a resolution that opposes those reductions. Prior to voting on the resolution, City Council member Tom Rasmussen convened a special round-table discussion on the issue. Approximately 150 people showed up for the midday meeting in the Council's chambers.

Councilman Nick Licata - who sits on the Housing, Human Services and Health Committee chaired by Rasmussen - spoke on the City Council's history of supporting Section 8 and the need to keep discussing it.

"Being here today is good to educate us ... and lets the Congress know that this city and our citizens will not stand for the kinds of inhumane cuts that are being proposed," he said.

*The Tenants Union is organizing a rally at noon on Aug. 3 at the Federal building in downtown Seattle to demand that cuts to Section 8 be rescinded. For more information call 206-723-0500.*

Tom Tierney and Stephen Norman, the executive directors of the Seattle and the King County Housing Authorities, sat on the panel convened by Rasmussen. They outlined the issue and discussed the impact the cuts to the Section 8 program could have on their residents.

Combined, the two housing authorities are responsible for more than 15,000 Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers. Tierney noted that thanks to SHA's status as a Moving to Work housing authority, most of the agency's vouchers are probably protected from the 2004 cuts and projected 2005 cuts. However, he said that if cuts continue at this

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# No one likes options for Section 8 program

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rate, they are expected to equal about 30 percent of his agency's budget by 2009.

Housing authorities that are facing these cuts are left with three options Tierney said. He finds none of them to be acceptable.

First, housing authorities could cut back on allowable rents which would limit the latitude people have when choosing where to live and would have the end result of concentrating poverty in certain areas.

Next, he said that if cuts pass in 2005, those costs can be spread out nationwide. This would increase the rents for all families in the country by an average of \$70 a month.

"There are not many low-income people who can spend another \$70 a month on housing," he said.

Finally, Tierney said that the number of people in the Section 8 program could be cut in order to save money.

"I've stopped trying to think about that because it is just too depressing," he said.

Norman continued the same theme when he told the crowd that KCHA administers 8,200 household vouchers for 21,000 people, 10,000 of whom are children. He pointed out that the cuts could result in KCHA having to remove 800 households from Section 8 by the end of 2005 and up to 2,500 by 2009.

"This is very much a significant system," he said. "Section 8 is a critical piece of the safety net."

A major theme of the day's meeting was making sure residents and other citizens stay involved in the fight to save Section 8.

Siobahn Ring, the executive director of

the Tenants Union, a Washington advocacy group, was specifically asked to address the topic in her presentation. She said that it is important to support elected representatives who support this cause by thanking them for their support. People also need to make their displeasure over the cuts heard at the highest levels of government.

"Put your bodies and your voices out there to show your support for the Section 8 program," she told the crowd.

During the public comment period, members of the audience stood up to voice their support for Section 8 and the elected representatives fighting to save it.

"I'm scared of what's going to happen," said Mary Monroe, a disabled recipient of Section 8 assistance since 1991. "Without this, we will all be out on the street."

Gloria Owens, another holder of a Section 8 voucher was in tears as she spoke. "I can't tell you how much it means to people that council members make this a priority," she said. "Please don't give up on us."

Jim Joelson, a former president of The Advocates, an organization that represented the interests of residents of the Seattle Senior Housing Program, asked Norman and Tierney how hard they were willing to fight to save Section 8.

"I've been in affordable housing too long to start throwing people out now," Norman said.

"If you can't expect me to raise a little hell over Section 8, you ought to find someone else to represent you at SHA," Tierney told the crowd.